

Concept and Summary

FEASIBILITY OF A
CONVENTION CENTER COMPLEX
IN ST. LOUIS

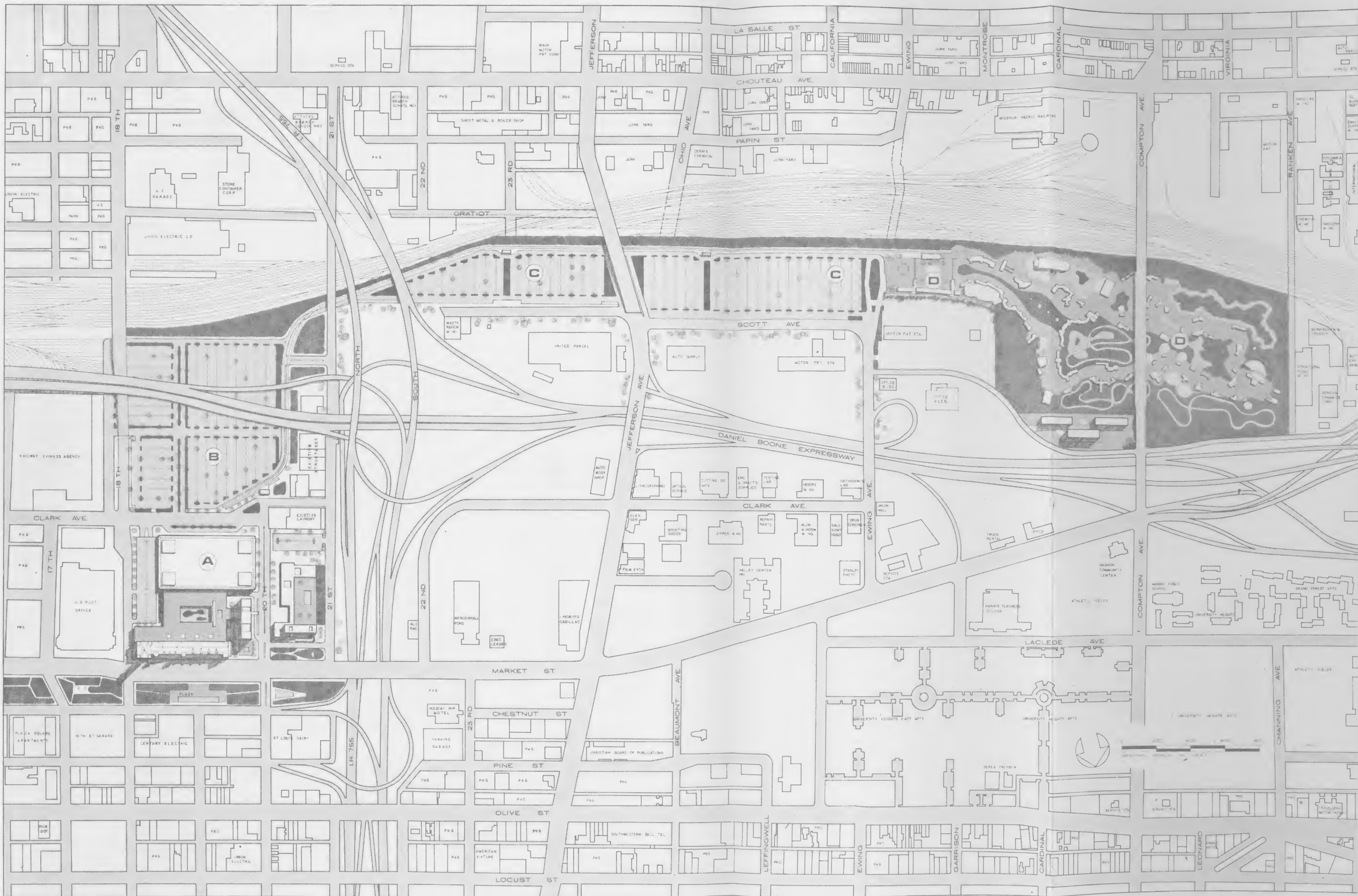
Prepared for
CITY OF ST. LOUIS

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e.r.a.

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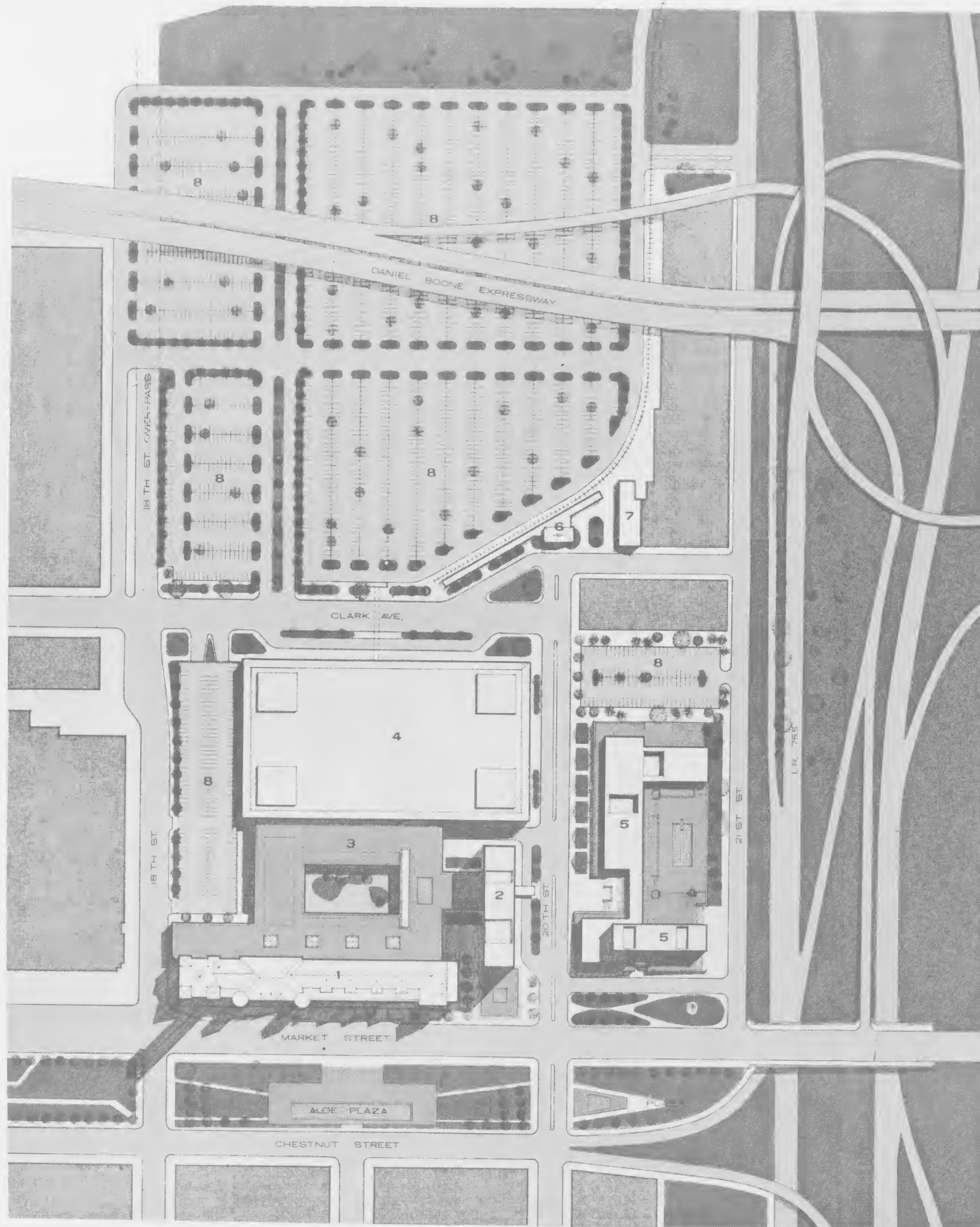
LEGEND:

- (A) CONVENTION CENTER COMPLEX
- (B) PARKING / SHUTTLE TRAIN
- (C) PARKING
- (D) THEME PARK

**A STUDY FOR A
CONVENTION CENTER COMPLEX
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

ARCHITECTS
SCHWARZ & VAN HOFEN
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
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SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

FIG. 1
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PLAN OF CONVENTION CENTER

LEGEND:

- 1 INTERNATIONAL HOTEL
- 2 CONVENTION HOTEL
- 3 SHOPPING MALL & HOTEL ANCILLARY
- 4 CONVENTION & EXHIBITION HALL
- 5 MOTEL
- 6 SHUTTLE TRAIN DEPOT
- 7 SHOPS
- 8 PARKING
- AREA EXCLUDED IN PROJECT



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PLAN OF THEME PARK

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 FORE COURT | 11 CHILDREN'S WORLD | A THE ST. LOUIS SKYWAY | L THE RACEWAY |
| 2 PLACE DE ARMES | 12 THE ARENA | B DANIEL BOONE'S ADVENTURE | M THE MAYPOLE |
| 3 ST. LOUIS R.R. STATION | 13 MOTEL | C LEWIS & CLARK'S EXPEDITION | N HUCK FINN'S ISLAND |
| 4 ADMINISTRATION & EMPLOYEES | 14 PARKING | D FRONTIER TURKEY SHOOT | O CHOUTEAU'S POND |
| 5 TROLLEY CAR | 15 CAFE DE POULET | E THE RUNAWAY MINE TRAIN | P MISSOURI TRAPPER'S RIVER |
| 6 THE DINING CAR | 16 GINGERBREAD STREET | F TIN LIZZY TOUR | Q THE BLUE BIRD |
| 7 THE RIVERBOAT MUSIC HALL | 17 MOD STREET | G THE BLACK DRAGON | R THE DOLL HOUSE |
| 8 ST. LOUIS SQUARE | 18 PIONEER SETTLEMENT | H LA RONDE | S FAIRY TALE VOYAGE |
| 9 SNACK-A-TERIAS | 19 RIVER FRONT | J MILL POND | T TALES OF THE MISSISSIPPI |
| 10 RIVER FRONT RESTAURANT | RR REST ROOMS | K THE SKYWHEEL | |



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FIG. 3

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FIG. 8
THE GREAT HALL

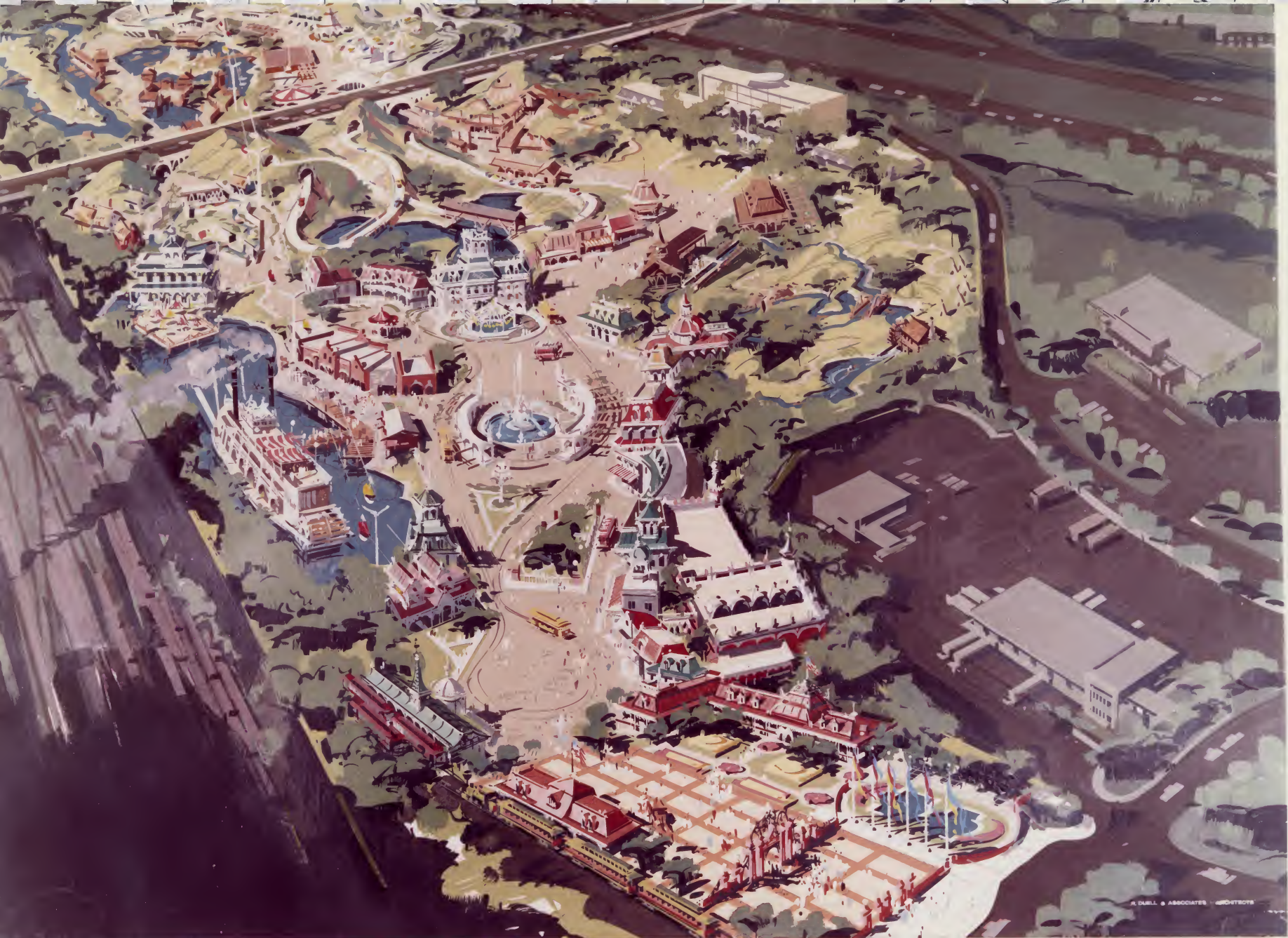


fig. 9

A STUDY FOR A
CONVENTION CENTER COMPLEX
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

400-000
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ARCHT.



FIG. 10
RAILROAD STATION



FIG. 11

DINING CAR AND TROLLEY



FIG. 12
RIVER BOAT MUSIC HALL



FIG. 13
RIVER RAFT

particularly in the Union Station area. The station itself will be the only structure retained.

Although access to the site is potentially excellent, a good deal of adjustment in offramps and feeder street changes will probably be necessary to handle the large crowds expected at the facilities.

CONCEPT OF THE PROJECT

The concept of the project includes ingredients that are mutually compatible and complementary. The basic elements are as follows:

1. Convention center
2. Theme park
3. Convention hotel
4. Motor hotel
5. Specialty restaurants and shops
6. Parking

Elements 3 through 5, and part of Element 6 will be developed by private capital on leased land within the complex. The convention center, theme park, and main parking lot will be operated by a nonprofit organization chartered by the city.

A similar array of facilities is found in only two other cities in the nation. The Disneyland Complex, which includes the park, the Anaheim Convention Center, and roughly 5,000 hotel and motor hotel rooms is the larger. Facilities at the Astrodome in Houston include the 500,000-square-foot Astrohalla and a recently completed theme park and will ultimately offer 3,000 hotel rooms. The Houston facilities compare most directly to the proposed complex in that they are all included within an area controlled by a single entrepreneurial interest.

A brief description of each of the elements of the St. Louis convention-center complex is provided in the following paragraphs, and the concept is visually illustrated in Figures 4 through 13.

Convention Center

The convention center is conceived as a major facility offering a 150,000-square-foot exhibit hall for exhibit events, meetings, large banquets, and dances; 20 meeting rooms with capacities ranging from 50 to 3,000 persons; and associated service facilities. This facility will once again place St. Louis in a strong position to compete with other major cities in the nation for convention business. The multiplicity of activities in the total complex should, in fact, make the convention center highly popular among convention groups. The direct connection with the theme park should provide an incentive for families to join the convention, and the specialty restaurant and shopping complex should also appeal to families, making their stays more enjoyable.

The convention center will, of course, also be a primary source of demand for the hotel and motor hotel rooms.

Theme Park

A theme park is a relatively recent addition to the commercial-recreation scene. Essentially, the term applies to a high-quality family amusement center designed around a central theme (or several themes) which contains a variety of specially designed rides and attractions as well as live entertainment. The investment per unit of capacity in a themed park is normally three to five times greater than in the standard amusement park, and the variety of facilities is such that the average visitor normally plans his visit well in advance and stays in the park five hours or more.

St. Louis currently lacks this type of activity and is even without a good amusement park since fire destroyed the old Forest Park Highlands facilities. Such an attraction would, therefore, fill a void in the recreation offering of the area and would help to attract and hold tourists to the area and to each of the other elements of the project.

CONVENTION HOTEL AND MOTOR HOTELS

The convention hotel and motor hotels are essential elements of the total complex because of the need to conveniently house visitors from outside the St. Louis area. The proposed site is beyond walking distance of

the major hotels in downtown St. Louis, and, therefore, a nucleus of accommodations is needed at the site. Moreover, the addition of 1,000 new rooms to the inventory of hotel accommodations in the downtown area would help to alleviate one of the area's greatest deficiencies in serving the convention market--the lack of a large number of first-class accommodations in the downtown area.

The hotels will also draw visitors whose primary purpose for visiting is not associated with the complex, but who will probably participate in several aspects of the project while there.

Specialty Restaurants and Shops

The specialty restaurant and shops area can be one of the most exciting elements of the complex if operated in the tradition of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco, Ports O'Call Village in Los Angeles, the International Market Place in Honolulu, or similar operations such as at Place Ville Marie and Place Bonaventure in Montreal. Its appeal would be such that its market would encompass local residents, tourists, conventioners, and hotel guests. . Some 35 to 50 boutiques, entertainment houses and restaurants could be housed in the recommended 50,000 square feet of space.

Parking

In the age of the automobile, parking is normally considered a necessary, rather than desirable, element. However, in the program conceived for this project, parking service would be unique in that the transportation system from visitors' cars to the facility's entrance would be a train. The train would be designed to re-create the era when trains were the primary mode of cross-country travel and should thus be a substantial improvement over the rubber-tire trams frequently used to transport visitors through parking lots at large theme parks.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The economic planning for the complex is based on the above mix of complementary facilities, with revenue-generating operations supporting the capital costs of the convention center. By this means, it is possible to create the new convention center without cost to the taxpayer.

Organization

It is assumed that the city will establish a nonprofit agency charged with the responsibility of developing and managing the complex. The agency will be empowered to issue revenue bonds or to otherwise negotiate financing. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that financing will be obtained through a revenue bond issue of \$25 million at an interest rate of 6 percent. This amount should be sufficient to cover capital improvements to be made by the agency as well as pre-opening costs.

Construction Cost

The facilities to be constructed and operated by the agency chartered to manage the complex will cost an estimated \$20,130,000, as follows:

	<u>Estimated Construction Cost</u>
Convention center	\$8,630,000
Theme park	9,200,000
Parking (including train)	2,050,000
Demolition	<u>250,000</u>
Total	\$20,130,000

Operating Revenues

Revenues, expenses, and net operating profits of the agency were based on an analysis of actual results of similar projects throughout the country. The net operating profit is to be devoted to necessary expansions, overhead costs, and amortization of the bonds.

Source and Application of Funds

Table 1 shows a simplified source and application of funds statement for the project for the years 1973, 1976, and 1981, or the second,^{1/}

^{1/} This will be the first full year of operation since the opening is assumed to be July 1, 1972.